

Homily: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent: Cycle C: 2024: Jer 33: 14-16; Ps. 25; 1 Thes 3: 12- 4:2;  
Lk 21: 25-28, 34-36

***“Holy Preparation in the Season of Advent for the Coming of the Lord”***

1. As we begin this holy season of Advent and this new liturgical year it is a great opportunity to draw closer to our loving Lord who became a little baby to save us from the power of satan, sin and death, and to invite others to do the same, esp. those away from God and the Church – invite at least one person back to the Faith or to discover it for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. What a gift it is to share this treasure with others.
2. Advent is a time of **anticipation, waiting** and **preparation**. We are remembering both the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Jesus as a little baby in Bethlehem, and also looking forward to His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming in glory at the end of time. How do we prepare ourselves for these great spiritual mysteries? Well, the best thing we can do, the best gift we can give back to the child Jesus is to allow Him to transform our lives in His truth and love. This means taking the steps necessary on our end to help bring this about - to have a deeper interior conversion. There are some golden opportunities to do this during the Holy season of Advent: not forgetting about coming to **Mass on the Holy Days: December 8 (9<sup>th</sup> this year), Christmas and January 1**; receiving **the Sacrament of Confession** especially if it’s been a long time since we have made a good Confession, truly taking advantage of the many times this Sacrament is offered during the Holy Season of Advent (*Parish Penance service on Sunday December 15*), to receive forgiveness of our sins, which can help prepare our souls to receive the Lord in a deeper way - if we make a totally honest and heartfelt Confession. Doing some type of **penance** in reparation for our past sins is another gift we can give to the Lord this Advent season. The liturgical color of purple both signifies anticipation and penance. There is no inherent contradiction between having a joyful spirit looking forward to Christmas day and doing some penance at the same time; it is not the same as Lent, but there is a penitential aspect to Advent. **Praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet** as individuals or even better as a family, or trying to attend **daily Mass**, or at least one extra day a week if our schedule allows it, as

well as coming to our **Eucharistic Holy Hours on Wed & Fri at 3 pm**, are other powerful ways we can prepare our souls to receive the Lord. We also should spend Advent pondering the mystery of the **Infancy narratives** in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew chapters 1 and 2. We also should be **doing some acts of charity** to help the less fortunate, e.g., our Parish St Vincent de Paul society, and not buying unnecessary items for ourselves or others which just draw us more and more into the emptiness of materialism. **Remember Christ is the reason for the season** - not endless shopping and parties! Although Advent/Christmas parties and even a bit of shopping are nice - if put in proper spiritual perspective.

3. Advent should be a time that fills us with a spirit of **hope**: *the supernatural infused gift of God in our souls, which we receive in seed form in our Baptism, by which we look forward in confidence to the fulfillment of all of God's promises in due time.* **We can all grow in this virtue.** As a Church we believe with all our Faith that when Jesus comes again in glory there will be a definitive end of sin, death, destruction, injustice, pain, sorrow and misery since Jesus has already won the definitive victory over Satan, sin and death: beginning with His coming as a little baby in His holy Incarnation. **If we seek to enter into this mystery of the Lord coming among us as a little baby in holy silence and love, it will lead us to greater holiness, love, justice, peace and joy, even now in the midst of our often dark and depressing world!** We will be given by God's free gift a more profound spiritual taste of this reality, if we **don't get caught up in the materialistic rat race of this time of year** which is how our spiritually blind secular society celebrates this season the motto of which is basically: ***Buy, buy, buy and buy some more*** - which is truly depressing! In contrast, Jesus warns about this dynamic in the Gospel today, *Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, or that Day will catch you by surprise like a trap.* **He is speaking about His second Coming, but it also ties into the proper remembrance of His first coming.** **Remember Jesus is the only real reason for this season!** If we remember that truth, we will be full of the joy and hope that comes from the Lord and the Advent season. God bless you. †